

NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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RON PEMSTEIN/WARSAW

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POLAND AND ISRAEL

ANNCR:

POLAND, LIKE ALL WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES EXCEPT ROMANIA, DOES NOT MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. BUT POLISH LEADER EDWARD GIEREK IS NOW TALKING ABOUT BETTER CONTACTS WITH JERUSALEM IN THE FUTURE. MISTER GIEREK'S STATEMENTS FOLLOW SOME POLISH ATTEMPTS AT RECONCILIATION WITH ISRAEL AND JEWS. RON PEMSTEIN SENT US THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM WARSAW..

VOICE:

THERE WERE NO ISRAELI PERSONALITIES PRESENT AT THE TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING.. TEN YEARS AGO, THE YEAR WAS 1968, THE POLISH POPULACE WAS SUBJECTED TO ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA IN THE WAKE OF THE 1967 WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ONLY THIRTY-THOUSAND JEWS REMAINED IN POLAND OF THE MORE THAN THREE MILLION WHO LIVED THERE BEFORE WORLD WAR TWO. BUT A MASS EXODUS OF THESE FEW BEGAN, LEAVING ONLY TEN THOUSAND JEWS IN POLAND TODAY.

ALTHOUGH EDWARD GIEREK PUSHED ASIDE THE NATIONALIST ANTI-SEMITIC FACTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AFTER TAKING POWER, POLAND'S IMAGE COULD NOT BE REPAIRED IN SUCH A SHORT TIME. ISRAEL AND JEWS BOYCOTTED THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GHETTO UPRISING. BUT THIS APRIL AT THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY, THE CONTRAST WAS EVIDENT.

POLAND -- WITH NO EXPLANATION OF WHY IT TOOK SO LONG -- OPENED A PERMANENT EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO JEWS AT THE AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP SITE. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS NATIONAL EXHIBITS AT AUSCHWITZ BUT NONE DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE LARGEST GROUP EXTERMINATED THERE. NAHUM GOLDMANN, THE HEAD OF

THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS, LED ONE DELEGATION AT THIS YEAR'S CEREMONY AND WAS LATER RECEIVED BY POLISH PRESIDENT HENRYK JABLONSKI.

ALSO, THE WARSAW NEWSPAPER ZYCIE WARSZAWA PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW WITH MISTER GOLDMANN.

ISRAELI PARLIAMENT MEMBER GIDEON HAUSNER LED A GROUP OF SOME THIRTY ISRAELIS TO THE WARSAW GHETTO CEREMONIES. FOR THE FIRST TIME ON POLISH SOIL, ISRAEL WAS PERMITTED TO AWARD MEDALS TO POLES WHO RISKED THEIR LIVES SAVING JEWS DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION. THE HIGH-LEVEL RECEPTION FOR THE FIRST ISRAELI DELEGATION IN ELEVEN YEARS LED MISTER HAUSNER TO SAY THE CELEBRATION MAY BE A BREAKTHROUGH TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS SEEMS WISHFUL THINKING, CONSIDERING POLAND'S LOYALTY TO THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY LINE. BUT IN AN INTERVIEW MADE PUBLIC LAST WEEK, MISTER GIEREK DID NOT DISMISS THE POSSIBILITY. HE RECALLED POLAND'S ROLE IN ISRAEL'S FOUNDING AND SAID THE ISRAELI PEOPLE AND JEWS HAVE THE RIGHT TO A STATE WITH INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES. MISTER GIEREK SAID RESTORING RELATIONS COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED, BUT WHEN THIS WOULD HAPPEN, HE ADDED, DID NOT DEPEND ON POLAND BUT ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

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WJL/RTD